

**Town Meeting Coordinating Committee**  
Meeting of Thursday, April 8, 2010  
Amherst College, Converse Hall, room 207

**Attendance:** Peggy Roberts, Nonny Burack, Mary Streeter, Harry Brooks, Dorwenda Bynum-Lewis, Rob Crowner, Carol Gray (nearby); also: Harrison Gregg, Aaron Hayden, Andy Anderson, Jeff Lee, Cameron.

**Time:** Approximately 4:30pm to approximately 5:30pm.

**Report of meeting:** Town Moderator Harrison Gregg and TMCC Select Board liaison Aaron Hayden host a demonstration of the electronic voting system in use at the College. The demonstration is performed by the College's academic technology services specialist, Andy Anderson.

Implementation would require advance uploading of a spreadsheet with the names of Town Meeting members associated with particular identified remote devices. Upon sign-in at each session of Town Meeting, members would have to press a button on the remote to activate it, and then one or another button to vote "Aye" or "No" in any vote for which the system was used. Harrison indicates that voice vote would remain the primary method of decision-making, followed by electronic voting, followed by a roll-call vote if the system was not working.

A chart would be displayed on the screen in the front of the auditorium so that members could see that their vote had been registered, though it would not show which way individual members had voted. Members could change their vote any number of times within the time allotted for voting, with only the last vote being official. Following the close of voting, results can be shown with just a few clicks. Automatic recording of the votes in an electronic file would make posting results on the town website very easy.

The system is used in the classroom at Amherst for quizzing and student feedback. Other colleges use it for actual voting in faculty senate or similar bodies.

The cost of the system is approximately \$25 per remote device and \$250 for the host hardware, for a total of about \$7000 to equip 250 members of Town Meeting plus a few extra pieces. This is estimated to be the equivalent of the cost of about seven or eight years of tally cards. There would also be periodic expenses for batteries and replacement of lost or broken remotes. Dorwenda asks whether a quantity discount is available and Mary asks for a quote on an upgrade for the remote that would display how the user voted.

Harrison states that he plans to adjourn one session of the upcoming Town Meeting early in order to conduct a demonstration for interested members of Town Meeting. If the response is positive, the next steps would be to amend the town bylaws to allow for electronic voting in Town Meeting and then appropriate money to purchase the system. This could take place as early as Fall 2010 Town Meeting, with implementation the following Spring.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rob Crowner